

REMARKS

Claims 1-31, 36, 41 and 46-47 remain pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 16 and 24 are amended.

Applicants are grateful for the courtesy extended to the Applicant's representatives during the February 12 2004 personal interview. During the personal interview, Applicant's representatives argued that claim 1 is clearly distinguishable over the cited references. However, an agreement was reached to amend the independent claims to more clearly distinguish the independent claims over the prior art of record.

Reconsideration based on the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. The Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 10-17, 20-25, 28-31, 36 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 4,937,673 to Saito et al. (Saito) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,815,201 to Hashimoto et al. (Hashimoto) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,660,102 to Kawakami et al. (Kawakami). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In particular, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of applied references fails to disclose or suggest the information input apparatus comprising at least the features of an imaging device that forms the digital images of a subject, a sound recording device that records sounds in a state of recording mode, a storage medium that stores at least one of the digital images formed by the imaging device and the sounds input by the sound recording device, a release switch that initiates a process of forming the digital images by the imaging device, a sound effect output device that outputs a preset sound effect when the release switch is operated and a control device that connects to the sound recording device, the storage medium and the sound effect output device, wherein while in the recording mode, the control device controls the sound effect output device to prevent outputting of the

non-mechanical preset sound effect when the release switch initiates the process of forming the digital images, as recited in amended claim 1, and similarly recited in amended claims 16 and 24.

Saito teaches a combination video and still picture camera unit which is provided with a mechanism which prevents film wind and rewind operations during movie picture shooting so as to prevent the noise due to the film wind or rewind operation from being recorded by the video camera unit. Thus, in order to prevent recording of undesirable sounds, Saito limits functions of the device.

Hashimoto merely teaches a digital camera which is capable of capturing digital images and audio which is recorded simultaneous to the capture of the image, such as description of the image or verbal impression of the moment at which the image is captured. Thus, Hashimoto does not teach suppression of sounds to prevent undesired recording.

Kawakami teaches an electronic still camera which is capable of editing pictures recorded on the storage medium of the camera. When the shutter release button of the camera is actuated, and in order to clearly notify the recording operation to the operator, a tone generating device such as a piezoelectric device may be arranged so that a pseudo shutter sound is produced when recording operation on the magnetic disk is initiated. However, because the device of Kawakami is only a digital still camera, it is not capable of recording audio signals. Moreover, it is this type of sound which is being suppressed in the invention of claims 1, 16 and 24 of the present application. Because the invention of Kawakami is only a digital still camera, there would be no reason or motivation to suppress this sound. Furthermore, combining Kawakami with the other references would teach preventing functions from being available during recording, rather than stopping the shutter sound in order to prevent undesired sounds from being recorded.

Thus, Saito teaches a combination still and video recording device which disables the film and rewind operations during video recording to prevent recording of the sound caused by rewinding. Hashimoto teaches a digital camera capable of recording audio at the time the digital image is captured. Saito teaches a digital still camera which emits a pseudo shutter sound when a still image is recorded. However, none of these three references separate or in combination, discloses or suggests disabling the preset sound effect associated with digital still image capture while the apparatus is recording video and audio signals, in a device which is capable of video and still image capturing. Thus, the combination fails to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claims 1, 16 and 24. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 16 and 24 were allowable over the combination of applied references. Claims 2-4, 10-15, 17, 20-23, 25, 28-31, 36 and 41 are also allowable for at least the same reasons stated regarding claims 1, 16 and 24.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-4, 10-17, 20-25, 28-31, 36 and 41 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 5-9, 18, 19, 26 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Saito, Hashimoto and Kawakami as applied above and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,576,758 to Arai et al. (Arai). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action relies on Arai to teach compression of the image data information. However, it is respectfully submitted that Arai fails to make up for the deficiencies of Saito, Hashimoto and Kawakami with respect to independent claims 1, 16 and 24, as discussed above. Therefore, claims 5-9, 18, 19, 26 and 27 are allowable at least for the reasons stated regarding claims 1, 16 and 24.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5-9, 18, 19, 26 and 27 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are

earnestly solicited. Rejoinder and allowance of non-elected claims 46-57 are also earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: February 25, 2004

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